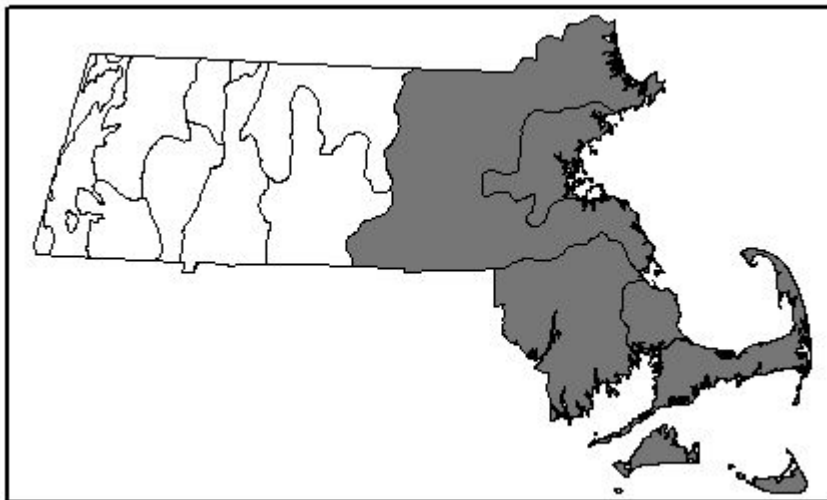


Community Name: ESTUARINE SUBTIDAL: SALINE/ BRACKISH FLATS

Community CODE: CE3A100000

SRANK: S4



Concept: Estuarine areas not exposed between tides, generally without emergent vegetation. Areas less than two meters deep sometimes support submerged or floating plants.

Environmental setting: Includes beds of tidal creeks draining salt marshes and river mouths. The salinity of the water changes with the tides and flow of rivers or streams. Actual species present at any place depend on salinity, water temperature, depth, and substrate type. More protected than Marine subtidal communities.

Vegetation Description: Eel grass (*Zostera marina*) and widgeon grass (*Ruppia maritima*) may form dense beds. Waterweed (*Elodea nuttallii*), coontail (*Ceratophyllum demersum*), sago pondweed (*Potamogeton pectinatus*), and horned pondweed (*Zannichellia palustris*) may be mixed in or form locally dense beds. Macroalgae [seaweeds] can be locally dense. Invertebrates vary with substrate and depth.

Associations:

Habitat Values for Associated Fauna: Submerged vegetation provides winter feeding sites for waterfowl including Brandt (*Branta bernicla*) and American Black Duck (*Anas rubripes*), and sea birds. Vascular plant beds also provide habitat for larval and juvenile fishes and surfaces for attachment of invertebrates including shellfish. Fish such as Alewife (*Alosa pseudoharengus*), American shad (*A. sapidissima*), and Striped bass (*Morone saxatilis*) are characteristic of estuarine subtidal habitats.

Associated rare plants:

NONE KNOWN

Associated rare animals:

NONE KNOWN

Examples with Public Access: Joppa Flats, Newbury.

Threats:

Management needs:

Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program, Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

Synonyms

USNVC/TNC: *Zostera marina* Permanently flooded - Tidal Herbaceous Alliance --*Zostera marina* Herbaceous Vegetation [Provisional] [CEGL004336]; *Ruppia maritima* Permanently Flooded - Tidal Temperate Herbaceous Alliance -- *Ruppia maritima* Acadian, Virginian Zone Herbaceous Vegetation [CEGL006167].

MA (old name): Southern New England & Gulf of Maine Saline/ Brackish Subtidal Estuarine Communities.

ME: Marine - Mud bottom community; Tidal creek community.

NH: Possible, not described.

NY: Marine eelgrass meadow; Tidal creek --Widgeon grass; Brackish subtidal aquatic bed.

CT: *Zostera marina* Hydromorphic Vegetation.

RI: Brackish intertidal mud flat; Tidal creek --Widgeon grass.

Other:

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